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January 10, 2008

Ravalli County Commissioners

To: Ravalli County Commissioners

Via: Fax# 375-6507

Re: Lost Horse Quarry vote

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Please consider the following questions prior to the Lost Horse Quarry vote on Friday, January 11, 2008:

1] The initial proposal as reported in the Ravalli Republic 6/25/07 quoted Supervisor Ohnstad: "The quality of rock needed for the balance between the public and their safety is at the abandoned quarry at Lost Horse." "The rock at Lost Horse is an attractive and affordable blend that will make distinctive improvements wherever we put it," Ohnstad said. The numbers provided by Supervisor Ohnstad showed very favorable savings to the County while providing a type of rock that could not as easily be found elsewhere in the county.

Q] Why was this proposal abandoned?

2] The new proposal from Supervisor Ohnstad is an exchange of material for labor between the County and the Forest Service. The Forest Service provides the material in the form of an "ok" to mine. The County must make available crushed material to the Forest Service – by providing the fuel, equipment, and labor costs for the benefit of the Forest Service. Then the County Roads Department must provide more fuel, equipment, labor costs and a storage site for the armor rock it extracts. Yet the Forest Service did not supply Supervisor Ohnstad with any of the material numbers stated in the proposal. Those numbers are from Supervisor Ohnstad. Rich Raines, Road Maintenance Supervisor for the Forest Service, in a discussion with Mark Behrman on January 8, 2008 stated that the Forest Service expects to use 1,500 cubic yards of gravel per mile for resurfacing the road from Lost Horse cabin to Bear Creak Pass and the Schumaker Campground, totaling 2.5 miles of road or about 4,000 cubic yards in the coming 18 month period. I join my good friend Jim Shockiey in supporting this much needed work by the Forest Service. Mr. Raines speculated that the County would have to upgrade the road between the end of the pavement to the quarry by laying down a six inch gravel base in order to move equipment to the quarry site and have the road be able to handle the heavy truck traffic that will move the armor rock from the site. Using Mr. Raines numbers, I have estimated the need for 200 truck loads, each carrying 20 yards, to resurface this area before equipment can be moved to the quarry.

Q] Where will this material come from and where are those costs stated in the proposal?

3] This rebuilding of the road between the end of the pavement and the quarry will impact irrigation ditches that traverse and parallel the roadway and will require repair and maintenance by the County Road Department yearly for the 10 years covering the proposal.

Q] Are these added fuels, equipment and labor cost figures included in the projections and cost analysis?

Q] Does the monetary value exchange for the County come close to equal to what the Forest Service is receiving or will the tax payers of Ravalli County, in the final tally, subsidize the Federal Government if this project is approved?

4] In the current proposal, Supervisor Ohnstad projects the County will harvest 25,000 to 35,000 cubic yards of armor rock. (January 2, 2008 Commissioner meeting notes)

Q] Where is that 2,500+ cubic yards of rock annually harvested, proposed to be used?

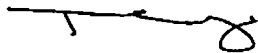
Q] Where will it be stored?

5] It has been suggested in every discussion that the neighborhood, with one exception, are the only folks against the quarry and only because it is in their neighborhood. Yet it has been several neighbors, including myself, who have stated that if it makes financial sense for the County to extract from the quarry, we could support it. Our "catch" was that we wanted to be sure that it does make sense financially. I want to be sure that the County isn't undertaking a proposal that has flaws or omissions that will ultimately raise my property taxes.

Q] Are you, as the guardians of the County purse strings, absolutely sure that supporting this proposal is in our best interest?

I look forward to your vote tomorrow.

Sincerely,



Tori Nobles
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